**Outline: (From New Interpreters Bible Commentary)**

1. **Ezekiel 16: 1-63, Jerusalem as Yahweh’s Wanton Wife**
	1. 16:1-34, From Foundling to Queen: A Tragic Tale
		1. Yahweh Rescues an Infant
		2. God takes a wife
		3. Jerusalem as Yahweh’s Unfaithful Wife
			1. Consorting with Idols
			2. Consorting with Foreign Nations
	2. 16:35-43, Jerusalem’s Mutilation and Murder
	3. 16:44-58, Like Mother, Like Daughters
	4. 16:59-63, Remembering, Renewal, and Shame
2. **Ezekiel 17:1-24, “Because he Despised the Oath and Broke the Covenant”**
	1. 17:1-10, A Fable
	2. 17:11-21, Interpreting the Fable
	3. 17:22-24, Israel Will be Exalted
3. **Ezekiel 18: 1-32, “Have I any pleasure in the Death of the Wicked?”**
	1. 18:1-20, “This Proverb Shall No Longer be Used by You”
	2. 18:21-32, “Why Will You Die, O House of Israel?”
4. **Ezekiel 19:1-14, A “Lament over the Princes of Judah”**
	1. 19:1-9, Maternal Ambitions, Bitter Outcomes
	2. 19:10-14, The Shocking Death of the Mothering Vine and Her Stems
5. **Ezekiel 20:1-44, Human Rebellion and Divine Determination in Israel’s History**
	1. 20:1-4, To Inquire of Yahweh
	2. 20:5-9, Israel in Egypt
	3. 20:10-17, The Egyptian Generation in the Desert
	4. 20:18-26, Like Parents, Like Children
	5. 20:27-29, Illicit Worship in the Land
	6. 20:30-32, Idolatry and Defiance in Exile
	7. 20:33-38, Back to the Future: Israel’s second exodus
	8. 20:39-44, Worship on Yahweh’s Holy Mountain
6. **Ezekiel 20:45-21-32, A Sword for Great Slaughter**
	1. 20:45-21:7, Fire and Sword
	2. 21:8-17, The Sword and the Slayer’s Hand
	3. 21:18-27, The Sword of the King of Babylon
	4. 21:28-32, The Sword Resheathed
7. **Ezekiel 22:1-31, Bloodshed City: The Destruction of Jerusalem and It’s Leaders**
	1. 22:1-5, The Case Against Bloodshed City
	2. 22:6-12, Jerusalem’s Misconduct
	3. 22:13-16, Jerusalem’s Sentence
	4. 22:17-22, Israel is Dross, Not Silver
	5. 22:23-31, Justifying God’s Judgment
8. **Ezekiel 23:1-49, The (Tragic) Tale of Two Sisters**
	1. 23:1-4, Setting the Scene
	2. 23:5-10, Oholah’s Adultery & Punishment
	3. 23:11-35, The Indictment and Punishment of Oholibah
	4. 23:36-49, Oholah and Oholibah: Together again in Sin and Judgment
9. **Ezekiel 24:1-14, The Parable of the Pot**
10. **Ezekiel 24:15-27, “I Am Taking from You the Delight of Your Eyes”**
	1. 24:15-24, Losses Too Great for Grief
	2. 24:25-27, A Final Word, A New Phase

Ezekiel 16:1 – 24:27

**Read Chapter 16:**

What concerns you in this passage?

How is God portrayed?

What is the metaphor trying to communicate?

Read this Analysis from www.enterthebible.org

It was common in the ancient world to speak of cities in personified, female terms, as if the city were a woman. Like chapter 23, here Israel's history is retold as the story of a girl who is born in poverty (16:1-6), but loved and blessed by the Lord, who then marries her and makes her wealthy, royal, and famous (vv. 7-14). But God's wife is wanton and plays the harlot first with false gods (16:15-22), then with other nations (23-34). In shocking detail, Ezekiel describes God's response: the "wife" will be mutilated and murdered by her foreign lovers with whom she committed adultery and harlotry. In this way God's wrath against the "wife" will be satisfied (16:42). This vision of sexual violence and murder is shocking in its details; for modern readers it may seem to encourage misogyny. Its theological implications are almost as troubling. It is a graphic image of God's wrath and the impending destruction of Jerusalem.

This extended parable, read in context and as part of the whole Christian Bible, must be interpreted with caution. It does not and should not sanction physical abuse of women, but reflects the cultural context of the day, in which women were subservient to their husband/master. Marriage could be a loving union, filled with joy and blessings, but adultery was punishable by death. At the symbolic level alone this story can speak to us of the reality of God's wrath and the terrible consequences of Israel's idolatry and faithlessness-but its literal depiction of physical abuse of women must be rejected.

**Read Chapter 18:**

Compare with this passage (the 2nd Commandment) from Exodus:

**Exodus 20:4-6**  4 You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. 5 You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, 6 but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.

How do you interpret the Bible when God changes God’s commands?

**Read Chapter 23:**

How are the actions of Israel and Samaria portrayed in this story?

What is God’s response?

What questions or concerns does this raise for you?

**Read Chapter 24:15-27**

What is the sign that will be communicated through the prophet and the prophet’s wife?

What is the message for the people?